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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the

Ministry of Community and Social Services

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SEP 18 1995

University of Toronto



Getting on-the-job experience

Ed Annoble (centre), a client of VRS job placement officer Alison Roberts, is working as a microfilm operator at the Archives of Ontario under the supervision of conservation and reproduction manager John Barton (left). The archives, part of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, is one of many OPS workplaces to provide job placement opportunities for Metro-area VRS clients. See the story "Job placement gives clients real work experience" on page 3.

Fraud prevention, new eligibility rules for welfare

A new central fraud prevention team and a province-wide telephone "hotline" for the reporting of suspected social assistance fraud are among the measures the government will be taking to combat welfare abuse.

The fraud prevention team will be set up by a re-allocation of existing staff, MCSS Minister David Tsubouchi said in the Aug. 23 announcement. The team will run the toll-free citizens' hotline and provide central direction for field staff.

Measures to combat fraud and to tighten welfare eligibility are expected to save taxpayers almost \$100 million in the first full year, said the minister.

Other measures include:

- Improving automated information-sharing with other provinces, the federal government, and other Ontario ministries and agencies to eliminate "double-dipping" in the Canadian welfare system;

- New conditions for 16-and 17-year-olds who leave home and apply for welfare that include family assessment, living with adult supervision and regular attendance at school or training;
 - Ending the practice of allowing people who live common-law from applying for welfare as a single person or single parent;
 - For employable people who quit their jobs or who are fired with cause, the period they must wait before applying for welfare will be extended from one month to three months;
 - Home visits by caseworkers will become a condition of receiving welfare;
 - A change in rules, as of January 1996, concerning standard shelter and utility costs, so that only actual costs, up to a set maximum, will be paid.
- Most of these measures will take effect in October.

"Mr. Kids Day" is still on the job

A lot of things have changed in the 13 years since Blue Jays Variety Kids Day began.

The Blue Jays don't play at Exhibition Stadium any more; now it's the SkyDome; and a general admission ticket costs up to \$13, not the \$4 it did in 1983.

But one thing is a constant: you know that Lloyd Kishino will be there.

Lloyd, who retired as co-ordinator of children's systems in Information Systems Branch in March 1994, continues in his role as chairman and ministry co-ordinator for this special day. On July 28 the evening game between the Blue Jays and the Oakland A's at Toronto's SkyDome was attended free of charge by 5,000 children and their escorts from all over the province — kids who otherwise might not have the chance to see a professional baseball game.

Despite his official "retired" status and recovery from major surgery in April, Lloyd continues to work full-time to coordinate Kids Day and ensure the memory of a lifetime for the youngsters attending the game.

Lloyd first got this "assignment" because he worked in MCSS children's services and is a Variety Club member (Variety is a co-sponsor). He made contacts throughout the province as part of his



by Kristin photo

Lloyd Kishino and his wife, Pat, at the 13th annual Blue Jays Variety Kids Day.

work in the agency automation support unit.

He's quick to point out that there are co-ordinators in the area offices (who help to select the children who go to the game) who have been involved in Blue Jays Variety Kids Day as long as he has. "The area office co-ordinators deserve a lot of credit for the work they do."

Parliamentary Assistant Janet Ecker

Janet Ecker, the MPP for Durham West, is the Parliamentary Assistant to Minister David Tsubouchi. She was appointed to the position by Premier Mike Harris in July.

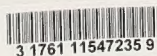
Prior to her election to office, Janet was the director of policy for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, which licenses and regulates the province's doctors. Before joining the college in 1991, Janet was a public affairs consultant specializing in health and environment issues.

Janet has extensive government experience as a communications and media relations adviser. She was assistant press secretary to Bill Davis when he was premier, communications director for the Ministry of Treasury and Economic Affairs, communications adviser to two Ontario environment ministers and a media liaison officer for the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.



Janet Ecker, Parliamentary Assistant

Janet and her husband, columnist Derek Nelson, moved to Ajax-Pickering in 1986. She was raised in Exeter, and holds a journalism degree from the University of Western Ontario.





Linda Taylor photo

Brent Taylor and his dad, Peter.

Take a kid to work

Editor's note: Wednesday, November 8 is the second annual **Take Our Kids to Work Day**, a learning experience aimed at Grade 9 students. This year the event has expanded to become a province-wide effort. If you have a Grade 9 student in your family, or know one, or would like to "host" a student in your workplace, you are encouraged to participate. For information, contact Iru Kirstein in the MCSS Communications and Marketing Branch at 416-325-5196, or reach him on e-mail.

Here is one student's account of his experiences on **Take Our Kids to Work Day** last year.

By Brent Taylor

Hi, my name is Brent Taylor. Last year I was in Grade 9 and I participated in **Take Our Kids to Work Day**. My dad works for the Communications and Marketing Branch of MCSS.

I started my day by being introduced to the people in the branch. Then I went to a Windows [computer] tutorial session and learned all about the file manager in Windows. I even got to play a

few video games in Windows.

After the tutorial session, I went to a news conference. The news conference was about the Ministry of Health's new anti-smoking policy. The minister of health was answering questions from about 15 reporters and about three or four television crews. That night I was on television.

In the afternoon I attended the minister's briefing while he was preparing for the Legislature. I don't think I could have remembered all the things that the minister had to remember. After the briefing I went into the Legislature to watch Question Period. Following Question Period I attended a reception hosted by the premier for a visiting delegation from Japan.

Although I had been to my dad's work before, I'd never really had a chance to see what he did or meet the people he worked with. Now when he goes to work I have a better idea of what he does, it was a good learning experience and I got a day off school. All good reasons to participate in **Take Our Kids to Work Day**.

Spiritual care policy

The **Spiritual and Religious Care Policy Manual** is now available.

This 243-page manual was developed as a guide to providing spiritual and religious care to those in government institutions and community-based programs in the province. In our ministry, this would include residents of facilities for people with developmental disabilities, and young offenders in custody, for example.

The manual was developed by the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care (or OMCSRC, a non-government body) and Chaplaincy Services Ontario (an organization for chaplains who deliver spiritual care within MCSS, the Solicitor General & Correctional Services, and Health).

Staff can borrow the manual from our Library and Career Resources; contact the LCR at the LIBRARY e-mail account, or telephone 416-326-6448, and ask for call number BL/80.2/M962/1995. Or you can purchase it from the OMCSRC Publishing Trust, 35 McCaul St., Suite 200, Toronto M5T 1V7 for \$26.95 (tel. 416-326-6858).



SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS CARE POLICY MANUAL

PLAIN LANGUAGE PLEASE

Here's another list of simple, everyday words to use instead of less familiar or multi-syllable words. A good rule of thumb: never use a big word if a little one will do.

Instead of:	Use:
accomplish	do
ascertain	find out
dependency	dependence
disseminate	send out
endeavour	try
expedite	hasten, speed up
facilitate	make easier, help

Praise for Paul



Paul McPhail

At the 6th annual Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities (OADD) Conference in Niagara Falls recently, Southwestern Regional Centre's Paul McPhail received a professional recognition award for his innovative work as manager of SRC's Applied Technology Laboratory. Paul has been with SRC for 30 years and has been worked at the lab for the past 12. Paul and the lab are widely recognized and consulted for expertise in the use of technology for people with developmental disabilities.

An update on the OPS Employment Accommodation Fund

From the MCSS Equal Opportunity Office

The July 19 announcement by the Secretary of Management Board of Cabinet and Chair of the Civil Service Commission, Michele Noble, that "all activities related to employer and joint employer/bargaining agent responsibilities under the Employment Equity Act will stop" has generated various concerns and inquiries regarding the **OPS Employment Accommodation Fund**. The MCSS Equal Opportunity Office (formerly

the Employment Equity Office) manages the Employment Accommodation Fund on behalf of the ministry.

In response, the EO Office wishes to assure that the fund will continue to assist ministries and Schedule 1 and 4 agencies in fulfilling their obligation, as an employer, to provide accommodation to persons with disabilities under the **Ontario Human Rights Code**. The announcement

referred only to those activities that relate to the **Employment Equity Act**.

While the policies and programs under the act support accommodation, the **Ontario Human Rights Code** is the basis for the fund's mandate. Employers have a legal obligation under the code to identify, remove or minimize the adverse effects of barriers in the workplace, or in ways of doing work, that prevent otherwise-qualified employees with

disabilities from performing their jobs.

A memo from Management Board Secretariat is being forwarded by the EO Office to line and human resources managers which responds to the most frequently-asked questions regarding the fund. The EO Office will continue to assist with applications.

If you have any questions, please call Imelda Reyes at the EO Office at 416-327-4814 or send her an e-mail.

Internal responsibility: making the system work

HEALTH
AND
SAFETY

By Malcolm McDougall, MCSS Joint Health and Safety Advisory Committee

In last month's article about the Ministry Joint Health and Safety Advisory Committee (MJHSC), we introduced ourselves to you and spoke about our role. Now we'd like to follow this up by talking about the rest of the committee structure and how it makes what is called the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) work.

The committee is in fact merely the tip of the JHSC structure which has more than 65 local workplace committees and 24 health and safety representatives across the organization. Every workplace with more than 20 workers (both union and management are included) is required to have a committee, with the union members selected by the union. A health and safety representative is required where there are more than five but fewer than 20 workers at a location, also selected by the union.

The joint committee structure is

intended to support the IRS, which is simply a means of ensuring that health and safety issues are identified and addressed in the workplace by management and workers working together. This is the most effective way of resolving such issues since the expertise to accomplish this is usually readily available on-site. The powers and responsibilities of workplace committees, supervisors, and workers as spelled out in the **Occupational Health and Safety Act** all contribute to making the system work.

We on the ministry committee would like to encourage all employees to take an active interest in the workings of their local workplace committees, and to support their efforts to make the system work in providing a healthy and safe working environment.

Our next column will appear in the December/January issue.

Job placement gives clients real work experience

By Ilsa Abraham, VRS Job Placement Officer



Photo: Brian Pickett

VRS job placement officer Alison Roberts (left) and conservation manager John Barton watch as Ed Annable photocopies an oversized document at the Archives of Ontario where Ed is on job placement.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services, or VRS, is a comprehensive employment program for persons with disabilities operated by MCSS. Geared towards the individual, it helps qualified candidates acquire the skills, such as the necessary accommodations (such as assistive devices), to return to or enter gainful employment. This involves assessment, career planning, restoration, retraining and placement services.

Our candidates are from many walks of life and professions. They are engineers, programmers and personal computer support staff; they are janitors, cooks, clerks, graphic artists and accountants. More importantly, they are individuals who, along with their technical skills and abilities, offer employers the opportunity to invest in an as yet largely untapped source of

creativity, fresh perspective and diversity.

While many of our "graduates" go on to immediate paid employment, there are those who benefit from work experiences, or training on the job, to help perfect their skills before they seek competitive employment.

To help them, VRS job placement officers act as a vital link to employers. We negotiate work

placement opportunities, then provide essential monitoring and follow-up services during the placement.

We also provide free workshops and consultation to employers about hiring and retaining persons with disabilities.

In Metro Toronto, the VRS job placement officers have been working together to place clients with employers that include the Ontario Public Service and government ministries. Over the years, the OPS has provided valuable placement opportunities, as well as employment, to our job seekers.

If your branch would like to know more about VRS or participate in VRS' employment programs in Metro Toronto, contact any of the following job placement officers (all 416 area code): Ilsa Abraham, 770 Birchmount Road, 325-0166; Alison Roberts, 121 Kennedy Road, 760-2494; Prabhitha Thadani, 815 Danforth Avenue, 314-5006; Sam Issa, 1870 Wilson Avenue, 325-9639.

A menagerie at Southwestern

By Julia Naczynski

Officially, Southwestern Regional Centre has a resident population of about 500.

But then there's the non-human residents who live off the land, so to speak. They are the animals whose official capacity is within SRC's livestock and horticultural program.

The furred and feathered population currently includes two pot-bellied pigs, a quarterhorse named Smoky Clover, five ponies, two donkeys, four goats, rabbits and at least 50 birds — geese, ducks, chickens, turkeys, pheasants, pigeons and mourning doves. And don't forget the sole sheep, Shaggy, who thinks she's human.

The program has been operating for 12 years, says staffer Mary Reaume, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations. The program provides meaningful work and job training to the residents who care for the animals, but it's also available to any resident who wants to visit with the animals.

Some animals were donated to the program, while others have come to SRC via the local animal

shelter of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals — like Pork Chop, one of the pot-bellied pigs. From time to time, SRC participates in the animal shelter's "foster parent" program, most recently as host to an abandoned dog, Goldie, and her five puppies (all were adopted).

The livestock program is open for visits by the public too, and school groups book tours to see the barn and greenhouse. Mary says the time around Mother's Day is popular, as well as October when the children can go on a tractor ride and take a pumpkin home. But anyone can come visit, and "if the animals are outside they're welcome to come see and pet them," says Mary.



(Above) Would-be picnickers: SRC's livestock program is getting back into goats. These Nubian goats were donated by the centre's auxiliary of parents and volunteers.



Photos by Wendy Penny, SRC

Pork Chop and Willie are the pot-bellied pigs in SRC's livestock program. Pork Chop was given to SRC by the local animal shelter after his owner, an apartment dweller, gave him up.

Just say "no"

Recently various suppliers have approached OPS ministries, offering programs that would allow government employees to purchase goods or services at a reduced rate. These promotional offers are sometimes called "employee purchase plans".

If you are wondering if you can or should participate in these programs, the short answer is: don't.

As a public servant, you need to avoid real and perceived conflict of interest.

Even if your work doesn't involve direct contact with a supplier making these promotional offers, you may be perceived to be in a position to influence decisions related to that supplier, or to derive special advantages from the supplier. That is conflict of interest.

For example, as a public servant you cannot participate in employee

promotional programs such as frequent flyer programs, vacation specials, discounted cellular phone air time rates or the purchase of computer software.

The ministry's conflict of interest guidelines, briefly summarized, state that an employee may not demand or accept (directly or indirectly) any gifts, discounts, loans, services or benefits from a person or corporation having dealings with the ministry or the government. In fact, you are required to report a conflict of interest, either of your own, in your family, or of another employee.

The conflict of interest guidelines are based on the Public Service Act and the Criminal Code of Canada.

For more information about conflict of interest, check the Electronic Manual of Ministry Administration (EMMA). The file number is 2003-01.

Ellen Waxman has been appointed a director for a project related to developing employment and non-vocational options for persons with disabilities in the new

Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Unit. In her new role she will report to a steering committee on disability issues that will be co-chaired by Assistant Deputy Minister of Program Management Sue Herbert, and ADM of Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Kevin Costante. The unit is located at 56 Wellesley St. West, 4th floor, Toronto M7A 2E7; Ellen's new telephone number is 416-326-1774. Others in the unit include Cate Parker (326-1730), Indira Moteeram (326-1789), Myra Rodrigues and Frank Schmidt. Clodhna McMullin has been named jobLink director, and jobLink has been re-named the **Employment Programs Branch** to reflect the work it will be performing in the development of workforce and in existing employment programs.

John Rabreau has returned to the ministry as project director to design the Guaranteed Support Program (GSP), in the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division. The mandate of this new program is to move seniors and the disabled out of welfare. John will be responsible for designing the delivery structure for the GSP, integrating employment opportunities for disabled persons into the design of the GSP, and collaborating with other branches in the division on the overall design and approach for welfare reform. John returns to us from Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations; he was at one time the regional director of the North Regional Office.



Ellen Waxman

Sue Braun leaves our ministry on Sept. 30, after 10 years with MCSS. She is currently the acting area manager in the Northwest Area Office (Thunder Bay).

Mary Sutherland left the ministry on Aug. 21 to become administrator of Hamilton Psychiatric

Hospital, Ministry of Health. Mary has extensive experience in both the private and public sectors in both mental health programs and child care. For the past three years, Mary was been administrator of Thistledown Regional Centre. **Gail Gonda**, the acting director of Tre-Add and acting superintendent of York Detention Centre, has assumed the responsibilities of administrator of the Rexdale Campus.

News from **Southwestern Regional Centre** in Cedar Springs:

Brian Mandeno, who worked at the centre for more than 30 years, has retired. He was the centre's fire safety officer. **Ruth Ann Walker** retired in June from the OPS after 31 years of

service. Among other accomplishments, she established SRC's seniors' program. When she retired she was facility supervisor. **Jean Singer** has also retired, after 24 years of service with the OPS. She was the seamstress in the laundry department. In July, **Jean McQuarrie** retired after 21 years of service as residential counsellor.

The ministry's offices on Simcoe Street and King Street in Oshawa have consolidated and moved to Whitby. The new address is **1400 Hopkins Street, Whitby L1N 2C3**. Update the 1994-95 Fall/Winter Telephone Directory on page 149.

The entire **Sault Ste. Marie District Office** is consolidating its three locations to a new one. After Sept. 11, the address will be 345 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie; the postal code is P6A 1Z3. Update your telephone directory on page 155.



Clodhna McMullin



Jean McQuarrie



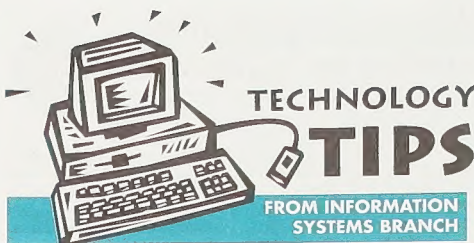
Jean Singer



Brian Mandeno



Ruth Ann Walker



Here comes the Internet

What is the Internet?

The Internet is a world-wide computer network, linking thousands of computer networks. It was created in the 1960s by contractors for the United States Department of Defense, was known as ARPANET and was a network connecting universities, the military and defense contractors.

The Internet was originally established to ensure communications in the event of a nuclear attack (it was designed so that if one location on the network went down, the other locations would continue to function) and to aid researchers in sharing information. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, other networks developed.

By 1985, approximately 100 networks formed the Internet. As of 1995, there are as many as 40 million users world-wide. Current growth for the Internet is about 100 per cent annually (in other words, the number of users doubles every year).

People use the Internet to send electronic mail to individuals; send information to mailing list subscribers; post information on newsgroup bulletin boards; retrieve files from other databases; and access educational institution, library, government and company databases.

In the next issue of **Dialogue**: The Internet and the OPS.



FOCUS ON CAREER RESOURCES...Career planning

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice." — anonymous

In today's changing work environment, individuals are faced with constant tough decisions about career directions. Library and Career Resources has an excellent resource collection on career information.

Books

Hopson, Barrie and Mike Scally. **Build your own rainbow: a workbook for career and life management.** 1993, 289 p.

This workbook provides a process which allows an individual to match their current skills and aptitudes against various jobs to discover interests, transferable skills and career options.

Meltz, Rochelle L. and Noah M. Meltz. **Taking charge: career planning for Canadian workers.** 1992, 200 p.

Provides a program of self-evaluation career planning exercises directed towards people in their 40s and older.

Misener, Judi and Susan Kearns. **Expanding your horizons: a career guide.** 1993, 308 p.

The authors contend that after completing the exercises, which are organized into four parts (planning your career; developing career skills; quality of work life; and exploring the workplace), an individual should be able to make informed career plans.

To borrow these, e-mail LIBRARY or call 416-326-6442.

dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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